

March 20, 2012

Good afternoon, Chair Fonfara, Chair Nardello, Members of the Energy and Technology committee. My name is David Foster and I come here today to oppose section 1 and 4 of SB 450. My small business, Wilcox Fuel has been located in Westbrook since 1955, representing 28 employees that service over 3,000 customers. We live here, support our community, create jobs, and pay taxes.

I oppose section 1 because it opens the door for a new tax on heating oil to create a energy efficiency fund to be implemented by the state of CT. With the states poor track record of improperly managing the "Gross Receipts Tax" designated for Underground Tank Cleanup Fund, what makes you think this fund would be managed any differently?

Without a tax, our industry has educated and promoted Energy Efficiency to the consumer, resulting in a 41% reduction for the average household heating oil consumption. In the 1980's my average customer used 1,200 gallons to heat there home and now they are using 700 gallons. No other energy source has reduced per-consumer consumption as successfully as Oil Heat. Without a tax!

Section 4 wants to convert my customers to natural gas. Isn't it bad enough that the state had the largest tax increase in history, doubled my operating fees and licensing fees this past year. Now you want to subsidize a multi-national, multi-state utility that is guaranteed a profit, increase their customer base, decrease mine at the expense of the consumer. What happened to the free market and fair competition? If the state wanted to choose a specific energy why didn't they choose the least expensive fuel 17 out of the last 20 years. Heating Oil!

Utilities claim that natural gas is a clean energy, they just conveniently forget to tell you that natural gas is made up of methane gas which is 21 times more harmful to the ozone and adds more greenhouse gas emissions than heating oil. 8 to 15 percent of pure methane is lost to the atmosphere from drilling, transporting and storing natural gas.

In 2010 legislation was passed to virtually eliminate sulfur in heating oil and add a renewable fuel component that would, by the end of the decade, displace 10% of traditional heating oil with cleaner burning, domestically produced renewable fuel. This renewable fuel is every bit as clean if not cleaner than natural gas, allows heating systems to operate more efficiently and cuts green house gas emissions by 40%.

In closing I strongly recommend the State of Ct. stay out of choosing a winner and loser between the 600 small Independent heating oil companies with over 13,000 employees, and the multi-national utility monopoly and vote against Section 1 & 4 of SB 450.

David Foster

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